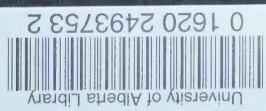


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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

BY

MICHELLE MURILLO

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS


IN

PRINTMAKING

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SUMMER 2006



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

Final Visual Presentation

Submitted by Michelle Murillo in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Fine Arts.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

GRADUATE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections,
University of Alberta, as part of the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Collection:

TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
Mangrove; Temporary Cessation	June 2006	Silkscreen and Relief on Aluminum Panels	20" x 80"
Insurance Value: \$1,800.00			

Under the Sieve | Michelle Murillo

"...the creator possesses a kind of "delicate sieve" that permits only the combinations of the greatest elegance and beauty to pass from the subliminal to the conscious self."
Henri Poincare 1

The multiple systems of the brain are responsible for different types of memory. Declarative memory is our conscious recollection of past experiences and can be classified in two categories. Episodic memories are specific past experiences and semantic memory is our ability to remember general knowledge. 2 For me, the most persistent memories are episodes connected to place and the specificity of environment. I am drawn to the organic characteristics of a place such as a horizon or the color and texture of vegetation. Memory connects our past and present, thus defining who we are. It is my hypothesis that memory is a narrative of the past that can also function as a compass in the present. I have chosen to explore memory as a theme in my work to evoke an emotive experience in the viewer with the awareness that the research is also reflective of my personal identity. My diverse cultural background, travel and experiences living abroad have heightened my awareness of the significance of place. Much like the iconic associations recognized in the Canadian landscape, I view place as a symbol of my personal history and identity. Therefore, narratives of memory in pictorial space become arenas for identity to be revealed and understood in the broader context of past and present experiences.

The exhibition *Under the Sieve* is an attempt to create a visual language that expresses the intricacies of episodic memory. Throughout the creative process I have referenced the medium of film, its structure and formal aesthetics to enrich my visual vocabulary and to inform my understanding of how narratives can be expressed. Film employs sound, dialog and imagery in a temporal format to recount narratives, which poses the question: can filmic aesthetics and methodologies be applied to static visual images to convey facets of memory? Because I have chosen to work within a strictly visual language the content must be arrived at through formal and structural considerations. Employing modular formats suggests the fragmentary nature of memory and linear compositions approach the visceral unfolding and retrieval of memory while also referencing filmic frame sequences.

Just as the process of evoking memory is an attempt to synthesize the seemingly disparate fragments of our experiences, it also parallels the creative editing process. As the film editor Walter Murch explains, "...the structure of a film is created out of finding harmonies ...visual harmonies, thematic harmonies and finding them at deeper and deeper levels as you work on the film." 3 A change in frame sequence can affect the meaning of a scene as structure effects the content of strictly visual narrative. Montage derives its content through juxtapositions and associations in which the editing process is critical and essential. In film and visual narrative these formal and conceptual considerations are also means to suggest interference,

displacement, and flux through unexpected juxtapositions and complex associations. Through my investigation of memory I hope to create catalytic structures for other's recollections and to heighten their awareness of place. In the broader sense *Under the Sieve* attempts to address the universal question of whether the idea of belonging to a place seems relevant in our diverse society and increasingly fragmented world.

1 McConkey, James, The Anatomy of Memory: An Anthology, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996. p126

3 Ondaatje, Michael, The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film, Vintage Canada, New York, 2002. p29

2 Stoddard, Tim, "Our Memories, Ourselves," *Bostonia*, Summer 2005. pp10-15

Under the Sieve | Michelle Murillo

8 - 26 August 2006
Fine Arts Building Gallery

Final Visual Presentation for the degree of Master of Fine Arts

University of Alberta Department of Art and Design
Edmonton, Alberta Canada



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Under the Sieve | Michelle Murillo

Exhibition of print works

8–26 August 2006

This exhibition is the final visual presentation for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking

Opening reception

10 August 2006
Thursday, 7 pm to 10 pm

Fine Arts Building Gallery

1-1 Fine Arts Building
89 Avenue & 112 Street
University of Alberta
Edmonton, T6G 2C9
Canada

Fine Arts Building Gallery hours

Tuesday – Friday: 10 am to 5 pm
Saturday: 2 pm to 5 pm
Sunday & Monday: closed
Statutory holidays: closed

Under the Sieve | Michelle Murillo

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Under the Sieve | List of Works

#1

Unfolding the Dreamer | 2006

Silkscreen on taffeta

32 x 32"

#2

Under the Sieve | 2006

Silkscreen, relief on fabric. Digital & relief on aluminum

74 x 210"

#3

Piecing the Conversation | 2006

Digital, relief on panel & vinyl text

16 x 96"

#4

What Remains | 2006

Silkscreen on satin

32 x 64"

#5

The Dreamer | 2006

Silkscreen on taffeta

64 x 64"

#6

Holding Pattern for Desire | 2006

Relief on fabric & mirrored panels

80 x 64"

#7

Between Recollection and Recognition I | 2006

Silkscreen & aluminum leaf on panel

32 x 32"

#8

Bromeliad; Recovery Sequence | 2006

Silkscreen on satin

16 x 64"

#9

Imagined Realities | 2006

Silkscreen, relief on aluminum & vinyl text
25.5 x 140"

#10

Layers Deep | 2006

Digital on panel & relief on fabric
38 x 112"

#11

Mangrove; Temporary Cessation | 2006

Silkscreen & relief on aluminum
20 x 80"

#12

From Short to Long Distance | 2006

Silkscreen on fabric
64 x 68"

#13

Backsliding | 2006

Digital & relief on panel. Relief on fabric
16 x 64"

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SEE Magazine: Issue #663: August 10, 2006

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Preview

Beautiful dreamer

MFA grad Michelle Murillo explores memory's place

UNDER THE SIEVE

By Michelle Murillo; Through Aug 26, Opening Reception Thu, Aug 10, FAB Gallery (1-1 Fine Arts Building, U of A Campus, 89 Ave. & 112 St.), Info: 492-2081

"The work is not neatly packaged into a succinct exhibition," states Michelle Murillo, surveying the show that serves as her final statement as an MFA printmaking student at the U of A. "It's meant that you view pieces as sequences and fragments that get taken in temporally. It's the idea of the fragmentary nature of memory—I'm looking at this in a broad context and hoping to create a similar experience to unfolding memory for the viewer."

While those who stay put may have the ability to sift through their pasts in an almost archeological sense, unearthing memories strata by strata to contextualize them, Murillo, like many with a peripatetic background, tends to link experiential and emotional memory to signifiers of place. With roots in Boston and significant chunks of her time spent in Miami, her recollections often begin with impressions.

Film is arguably the artistic medium that can function most similarly to memory, exploiting the same loops of consciousness with techniques that seem so natural to human beings that it has only taken a few generations to create and widely disseminate a workable lexicon around film technique.

We're almost universally familiar with cinematic structural shorthand that frames narratives—even children recognize the dissolve to a new scene, the flashback, the montage, the dream sequence.

In her artist's statement, Murillo asks, "Can filmic aesthetics and methodologies be applied to static visual images to convey facets of memory?"

The brilliance of Murillo's show, *Under the Sieve*, lies partially in what she stripped away from the weight of film and what she retained as a tool to explore memory in her print works. While you don't walk into the gallery and immediately identify the work as having ties to film, the artist skillfully employs approximations to the frame, the pan, and the dissolve, among other cinematic trickery.

"The show almost functions like installation," Murillo observes. "It was a luxury being able to reference the space while developing the work."

Knowing at the beginning of her educational stint at the U of A that she would be showing her thesis work in the FAB Gallery, she could scale and organize pieces to the room, integrating the gallery into her visual language.

She also synthesized her interest in the cinematic vocabulary with the argot of painting—her undergrad degree—and funneled both into the discipline of printmaking to harness her mnemonic ciphers. The resulting work is dense with idea, evocative, and lush. Weight is also lent to the show by Murillo's sensuous, orgiastic approach to materials (she prints on and layers fabric and metal) and colour (rich jewel tones, sepias, greys).

The pieces are stately, theatrical, and gorgeous without being over the top or didactic—the result of her making choices that are restrained, rather than constrained.

A big theme in her work is revelation and resolution—images become clearer and scenes open up, though remaining highly subjected and abstracted, as the viewer engages them.

One piece is a series of aluminum panels, some of which are covered with muslin-like fabric, that track the resolution of a sea sponge from a deep murkiness. Another is a grid of mirrors with sheer textiles stretched across them, printed with a relief pattern that recurs in several other pieces and that Murillo likens to "static or interference". Text is selectively interwoven with some pieces, but has a weight or loft of its own, sinking or floating, anchored by visual motifs that are largely organic, although loaded items like jewelry or scissors (an allusion to both film editing and her materials) are also represented.

"The images stem from personal experience and memory," Murillo relates, "but if I reduce them to elements—and not the immediate image, all at once—it opens them up and becomes more accessible. If it's an overtly, fully realized picture, I give away too much. Withholding information allows the viewer to let the pieces trigger their own personal memories and experiences."

She adds, "It helps to present it without being nostalgic. I want to bleed that sentimentality out, because the basis of the work is personal, but I want it to address broader ideas about identity and fragmentation."

SKETCHES

n Art Bar season—er, I mean summer—continues at the AGA. On Fri, Aug 11. The venue is hosting M.A.D.E. in Edmonton's event "Tag the AGA," which features an interactive graffiti installation by artist and industrial designer Clay Lowe. Lowe will be performing—er, I mean stenciling—throughout the evening, to the soundtrack of a couple live DJs and the clinking of event sponsor Bombay Sapphire-filled glasses. Apparently, visitors are encouraged to join in the fun from 9 pm until 1 am.

n One of Edmonton's strongest and most stellar emerging artists, Dara Humniski, is showing recent work at the Sugarbowl (10922-88 Ave., 433-8369). Humniski's dreamy, multi-layered drawing-based concoctions are thrilling, deeply moving, and lovely. Her site (www.zardex.com/pals/Dara/index.html) can't convey the beauty of the work—catch the real thing until the end of August. (MCO)

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE

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under.the sieve



michelle murillo

MFA PRINTMAKING

OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday August 10

7:00 - 10:00 pm

BUILDING | 89 AVENUE + 112 STREET
ALBERTA | CANADA | T6G 2C9

fab gallery
[FINE ARTS BUILDING GALLERY]

GALLERY HOURS
Tuesday to Friday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Gallery closed on Sunday, Monday
and statutory holidays

August 8 - 26, 2006 |

This exhibition is the final visual
presentation for the degree of Master
of Fine Arts in Printmaking.

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